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Title: Need to sanction setting up of sewage treatment plant in Ludhiana City to ensure cleanliness of Buddha Nullah, a seasonal water stream in Malwa region of Punjab.

SHRI RAVNEET SINGH (LUDHIANA): Sir, Buddha Nullah is a seasonal water stream which runs through the Malwa region of Punjab and after passing through highly populated Ludhiana City it drains into Sutlej River. The water of the stream is polluted after it enters Ludhiana city. Buddha Nullah used to be a fresh water channel with about 56 types of fish species prior to 1964. Now it has no fish because of the high level toxicity in the water. It is now an open sewer rather than a stream. Once an asset to the city, the Nullah is now a source of public nuisance and poses a serious health hazard.

Ludhiana, a megacity, has no sewage treatment plant of required capacity. Untreated domestic and industrial sewage of the city is emptied into the Buddha Nullah. The nullah in turn empties into the mighty Sutlej flowing nearby. Hundreds of tonnes of raw sewage from Ludhiana flows into the Sutlej every day and is distributed all over the State through irrigation canals. This polluted water is in turn used for growing food crops, vegetables and fruits and is a known carrier of diseases.

A joint study by Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research and Punjab Pollution Control Board in 2008 revealed that in villages along the Nullah calcium, magnesium, fluoride, mercury, beta-endoSulphan and heptachlor were more than permissible limit in ground and tap waters. Plus the water had high concentration of chemical and biochemical oxygen demand, ammonia, phosphate, chloride, chromium, arsenic and chiorpyrifos. The ground water also contains nickel and selenium, while the tap water has high concentration of lead, nickel and cadmium. According to Punjab Pollution Control Board, the nullah water requires a sewage treatment capacity of at least 150 million imperial gallons (680,000 m3) per day for treatment. In 2010, water samples taken from the Nullah, showed heavy metal content such as silver, manganese, nickel, lead, aluminium and Iron as quite high. Presence of uranium in high quantities in waters is the main cause of cancer in the region.

In order to permanently clean the waters of Buddha Nullah, I request the Government to sanction setting up of a new sewerage treatment plant of required capacity in Ludhiana city. Secondly, necessary financial assistance may kindly be provided to the industries for installing water treatment plants within their premises.